



Travis County

Community Development Block Grant Program:

Improving the Affordability,
Accessibility and Sustainability
of Neighborhoods and
Community Services

Summaries of Draft of Action Plan
for Program Year 2008 and
Substantial Amendment to 2006
Program Year Action Plan



Prepared by Travis County Health & Human Services & Veterans Service

The following document provides an overview of the Travis County Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, a summary of the recommended projects the County plans to implement for the 2008 program year, and the changes to projects from the 2006 program year.

Overview of CDBG

The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) initiative is a federal grant program administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The program provides annual grants to cities and counties to carry out a variety of community development activities aimed at revitalizing neighborhoods, improving affordable housing options, and providing improved community facilities and services.

Based on its population, in 2006, Travis County became an urban county entitlement community, a federal designation, which afforded the County the opportunity to apply for CDBG funds. Travis County applied for CDBG funds for the first time in 2006. The amount of funds Travis County receives on a yearly basis is based on a HUD-designed formula that takes into account the county's population size, poverty rate, housing overcrowding, and age of housing.

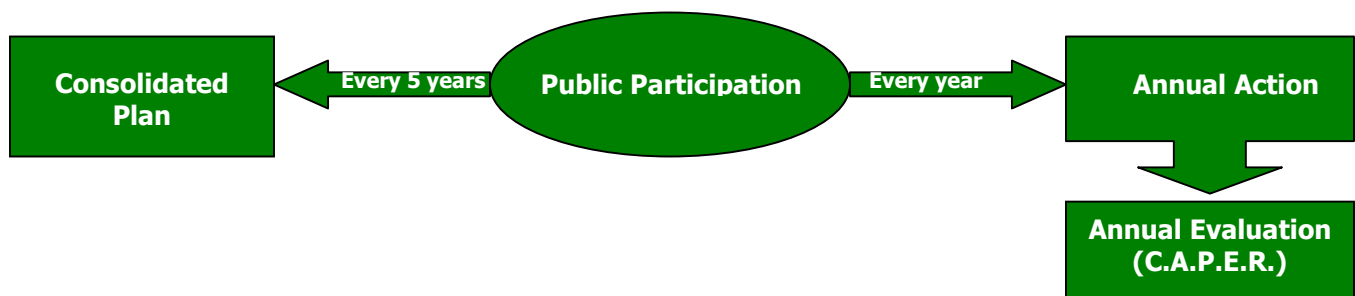
This is the third year Travis County will receive CDBG funds. As required by federal regulation, a minimum of 70% of CDBG funds must target services to low- to moderate-income residents. Additionally, Travis County's allocation specifically targets those living in the unincorporated areas of the county. Moreover, before an activity is eligible for funding, it must meet one of the following HUD's national objectives: 1) benefit low- and moderate-income persons; 2) aid in the prevention or elimination of slums and blight; or 3) address other community development needs that present a serious and immediate threat to the health and welfare of the community.

CDBG activities must also meet additional eligibility requirements set by HUD in 24 CFR Part 570. They must also address the priority needs established in Travis County's 2006-2010 Consolidated Plan. These priorities are: 1) the production of new owner housing units, 2) the rehabilitation of existing units, 3) the provision of infrastructure to promote affordable housing, 4) water/sewer improvements, 5) street improvements, 6) youth services, and 7) other public service needs.

As part of the management of the grant, the CDBG office must draft the following documents: a Consolidated Plan, an Action Plan and a Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation

Report (CAPER). The Consolidated Plan outlines the County's housing and community development strategies, goals, and objectives to be addressed over a five-year period. The Annual Action Plan defines the specific activities to be undertaken during the upcoming program year. The CAPER is conducted every year to assess progress and accomplishments. As seen below in the visual representation of the CDBG process, public participation has a central role in setting the priorities to be addressed.

Figure 1: CDBG Cycle



The Travis County Health and Human Services & Veterans Service Department (HHS/VS) is designated by the County as the lead agency for the grant administration of the CDBG program and the single point of contact with HUD.

Public Input

For the development of the Program Year 2008 (PY 2008) Annual Action Plan, different opportunities were offered for the public to provide input on the usage of the CDBG funds. During the months of February and March the County held public hearings and solicited proposals for the use of CDBG funds. Solicitation of input and invitation to participate in the public hearings were posted on the County's website, and were published in newspapers of general circulation. In addition, notifications were sent by mail to public service providers and to citizens who had previously attended public hearings.

Lastly, two public hearings are scheduled during the month of July, and a 30-day public comment period is scheduled from the 25th of June to the 26th of July to solicit comment on the proposed uses of CDBG funds in PY 2008 as well as the substantial amendment to the Program Year 2006 (PY 2006) Action Plan. Please refer to the attached ad that specifies the time and place for the public hearings and instructions for providing comments.

Summary of Program Year 2008 Action Plan

The Travis County Program Year 2008 (PY08) Action Plan lists the specific activities the county will undertake between October 1st, 2008 and September 30th, 2009 to meet the goals and objectives outlined in the 2006-2010 Consolidated Plan. The Action Plan details how the County will use the CDBG funds, as well as other available resources to address the County's housing and non-housing community development needs.

Proposed Activities for Program Year 2008

The Program Year 2008 CDBG award for Travis County is \$833,133. Allocations for community improvements are estimated at 73% (\$606,136), at 8% (\$64,788) for public services, and at 19% (\$162,209) for administration and planning. The funds are proposed to be used for 5 different activities:

- 1. Infrastructure for New Housing Development (\$500,000)** – This project will provide funds to Austin Habitat for Humanity, a designated sub-recipient, for the installation of infrastructure for a new single-family housing development project. The infrastructure will be installed in land that will be purchased with CDBG funds from Program Years 2006 and 2007. Affordable housing units will be built on the developed land and 41 very low and low income households will have the opportunity to purchase these homes at zero-percent interest financing.
- 2. Housing Rehabilitation (\$106,136)** – This program will provide home repair and weatherization services to very low and low income homeowners residing in the unincorporated areas of Travis County. It seeks to improve the energy efficiency, the physical living conditions, and the safety in owner-occupied homes. Services will be provided by a non-profit, designated as a sub-recipient and identified through a formal application process.
- 3. Social Service Program (\$ 64,788)** – This program, also funded in PY06 and PY07, will continue to support the expansion of a social service program managed by the Family Support Service (FSS) division of the Travis County Health and Human Services and Veteran Services Department. The funding for this programmatic year will provide case management services to 100 households residing in the unincorporated areas of the county focusing on precincts 1 and 4.

4. Water/Wastewater Planning (\$108,704) – This project, also funded in PY07, will continue to support a Senior Engineer who functions as a Project Manager over two active CDBG-funded street improvement projects and who will assess and provide a report for potential water and wastewater projects to be considered in the future.

5. Administration (\$53,505) – These funds will cover operating expenses associated with the CDBG grant including office supplies, training, contracted services, interpreting, membership and other business related expenses. In addition, it will cover the costs of contracting with a consultant that will complete an Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice in Travis County.

The following figure summarizes the proposed projects and allocations for program year 2008, and the categories under which each project falls.

Figure 2: Proposed Projects for Program Year 2008

Project	Activities	Amount
Community Development		
1. Infrastructure for New Housing Development	Installation of public infrastructure in land that will be used for the construction of affordable housing units	\$500,000
2. Homeowner Rehabilitation	Home repair and weatherization services	\$106,136
Subtotal:		\$606,136
Public Services		
3. Public Services, Other	Family Support Services Social Work Services Expansion – Travis County HHS/VS Program	\$64,788
Subtotal:		\$64,788
Administration and Planning		
4. Planning	Water/Wastewater Improvement Planning	\$108,704
5. Administration	Administrative Operating Expenses	\$53,505
Subtotal:		\$162,209
Total award by HUD:		\$833,133

Summary of Substantial Amendment to Program Year 2006 Action Plan

Every year, the progress of projects from previous Action Plans is evaluated to determine if any changes to funding or the deletion or addition of projects needs to occur. As outlined in Travis County's Citizen Participation Plan, a substantial amendment occurs when any project's funding is changed by 25% or more or when a new project is funded. Any substantial amendment must go through a 30-day public comment period as well as hold one public hearing.

On May 27, 2008, the Travis County Commissioners Court approved a substantial amendment to the PY 2006 Action Plan. The change to the PY 2006 Action Plan includes the deletion of the Family Support Services (FSS) Social Work Expansion program, which received \$83,659 and the addition of a project to provide the design, engineering and environmental review for a Road Improvement Project for Lava Lane located in Precinct 4.

Due to the difficulty of hiring staff to provide the Social Work Services, no funds from the PY 2006 program year were spent on the FSS Social Work Expansion project. The project is currently underway using the funds allocated to it in PY 2007. The reprogramming of the PY 2006 unused funds to another project allows for timelier spending of dollars. Additionally, due to an annual limit on the amount of money spent on public service projects established by HUD, the funds must be reprogrammed to a community development project. The proposed community development project includes:

1. Design of A Substandard Road Improvement Project (\$83,659) – The project funds the design, engineering and environmental review for the improvement of the unaccepted portion of Lava Lane, a road in Precinct 4. The improvements to this substandard road will provide a new durable road that will allow property owners, school busses, mail service providers, and emergency service providers to have all-weather access to the properties. Additionally, the improvements will allow the road to meet County roadway standards so that it can be accepted onto the County system for future maintenance and traffic safety enforcement.

Travis County Transportation and Natural Resources Department (TNR) will be the project manager and the design, engineering, and environmental work will be provided by a contracted consultant. The impact of the project will be 20 households.